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# Introduction

**More than twenty years of King County Annual Growth Reports:** The King County Department of Planning and Community Development published the first Annual Growth Report in 1983 as part of the preparation for what became the King County Comprehensive Plan of 1985. Good planning practice calls for monitoring of development activity and tracking the success of Plan goals. In 1983, the Department's "Land Development Information System" team prepared a baseline report of 1980 Census demographics, vacant land capacity data, and development data in unincorporated King County. The report was published in a loose-leaf binder so that elected officials and planners could add new information as it became available. The report was boldly titled "Annual Growth Report" with the hope that it would become an annual series.

It did in fact become an annual series, known as the AGR. The AGR series has become one of King County's most widely used documents, presenting frequently requested information in an easily used format. Each AGR contains growth trend data and maps of the past year's development with illustrative graphs and text.

Over the years, the Annual Growth Report has fulfilled two purposes. The first is to present a standard set of data on growth in King County. Staff of the County's Budget Office collect extensive current information that can answer questions about where, when, and how much growth is occurring in King County.

The second purpose of the Annual Growth Report is to provide a foundation for evaluating King County land use and development policies. Since 1997, this second purpose has been enhanced by the simultaneous publication of the Benchmark Report, which has taken over and expanded the monitoring function originally envisioned for the AGR. The data presented in these two documents will assist in tracking the effectiveness of County and City policies and plans, including the Countywide Planning Policies and the King County Comprehensive Plan, adopted to comply with the State Growth Management Act.

## The AGR and the Benchmark Report: Companion Documents

While the Annual Growth Report focuses on providing a broad range of growth-related data, the Benchmark Report is organized into 45 specific indicators which are intended to measure progress in achieving the goals of the 1994 Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) and the King County Comprehensive Plan. The system for the Benchmark Report was established by defining the desired outcomes of the CPPs, selecting relevant indicators for each outcome, and identifying quantifiable levels of achievement, or targets when appropriate. The Benchmark Report includes measurement and analysis of trends in:

- Economic Development - real wages per worker; median household income; new businesses and new jobs created; and educational levels attained.
- Environmental Issues - air and water quality; noise abatement; protection of ecosystems and species diversity; restoration of salmon stocks; and improvement in waste management.
- Affordable Housing - supply and demand for affordable housing; home purchase and rental affordability; and monetary commitments to affordable housing by local jurisdictions.
- Land Use Policy - apportionment of new housing units and jobs among urban centers, urban growth areas, and rural resource areas; progress of local jurisdictions in meeting housing targets; and preservation of forest, farmland, and open space.
- Transportation - Quantity and type of vehicle trips, modes of commuting, levels of congestion on current roadways, and local road repair requirements.

The Benchmark Report is being published every other month as a series of five Bulletins, one for each chapter listed above. Summary findings from all five chapters are included in Chapter II of this AGR. The Land Use Bulletin was published in

August 2004. Look for the Economic Development Bulletin in October, Affordable Housing in December, and the Transportation and Environmental bulletins early in 2005. While there will be some overlap in data presented, there is a great deal that is unique to each report. Although the purpose of the two reports is different, every effort has been made to assure consistency in the data presented. In cases where there appears to be inconsistencies in data, it may be that a different measure or source is being used – e.g. median home price (reported in Benchmark Report) vs. average home price (reported in AGR). Used together, the Annual Growth Report and the Benchmark Report provide a comprehensive picture of current growth conditions in King County. The Benchmark report is at <http://www.metrokc.gov/budget/benchmrk/>

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**To purchase a copy of the 2006 Annual Growth Report:**

Send a \$45.00 check (includes tax plus S&H, without S&H: \$40) made out to "King County Office of Finance" to:  
King County Licensing Division  
Room 411 Administration Building  
500 - 4th Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104  
ATTN: AGR

**The AGR will be accessible on King County's internet home page at:**  
<http://www.metrokc.gov/budget/agr/agr06/>

